



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

NEWS RELEASE

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Baucus Comments on Social Security Disability Determination Proposal

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) U.S. Senator Max Baucus made the following statement today regarding the disability determination process proposal released by Social Security Commissioner Anne Barnhart:

"I have heard from many people in my state of Montana who have had to wait months and even years before their Social Security disability applications and appeals were processed. This is absolutely unacceptable, which is why I have taken numerous steps to correct and streamline the process.

Since this serious problem was brought to my attention in 2001, I have spoken with Commissioner Barnhart numerous times and urged her to take concrete, proactive steps to eliminate the disability benefits backlog. In 2001, I secured a commitment from the Commissioner to develop a plan to reduce the disability backlog.

An important step was taken today with the announcement that a new approach is being developed that should allow the Social Security Administration to more effectively, reliably, and efficiently process disability claims and provide relief to the people who need it. There's still a long road to travel and I look forward to fully examining Commissioner Barnhart's proposal. I'm optimistic that through the use of the proposed electronic processing system and through common sense reforms we can end these serious backlogs and provide real relief."

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